N°. III. SATURDAY, JAN. 22, 1803.

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Those who have observed with attention the early acts of the French revolution, will recollect that some obscure and presumptuous individuals, in order to form a sort of mock senate, where they might deliberate, harangue, associate, and correspond, established a club, which they denominated *les amis de noirs*. Sentiment was the order of the day, benevolence the accredited pretext, and enthusiasm

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the natural result of those meetings, where nothing less was proposed than to emancipate, from undeserved fetters, a large division of the human race, and to compel the tyrant to lay by his scourge, and the miser to forego the means of unjust acquisition. These specious pretences gave the club a great reputation; and, in an age of political associations, the *amis des noirs* speedily increased their numbers, and enrolled among their adherents many of the higher class of nobility, with several ladies of rank and fashion; who, paying homage to the idol Equality, were content to mix in the same room with the lowest *canaille*, and most beggarly adventurers, who, assuming a momentary importance from this condescension, sate with their hats on, and treated their illustrious associates with no greater ceremony than is used between porters in a tap-room. The subordinate characters soon acquired a sufficient portion of popularity to maintain a complete ascendency; and, after the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, the Rochefoucalts and other men of that class, were obliged to bend before such people as Brissot, Petion, Gregoire, and Robespierre. None of these, except Robespierre, were sufficiently honest or sufficiently proud to refuse such bribes as the people of colour could offer, and from their pernicious

and mercenary exertions flowed a series of decrees on the subjects of slavery and personal equality, that produced massacres, conflagrations, and all the horrors which licentiousness, stimulated by self interest and revenge, could excite.—In the midst of reports describing barbarities sufficient to make the heart of man recoil, the legislators of France decreed freedom and equality to the men of colour, gave fraternal embraces to mulattoes and negroes, and invited emancipated slaves to the honours of their sittings. Such errors must ever mark the conduct of senates where passion is admitted to operate as a rule of proceeding; such must ever be the effect of permitting the establishment of abstract theoretical principles in assemblies where experience is the only secure guide, and where the general welfare of the whole should be the only governing motive of action.

But since France has judged it necessary to regain her West-India colonies, she acknowledges that slaves are indispensably necessary to their advantageous culture: she now finds them, however, trained and inured to arms, endued with the policy requisite to their situation, firm though wary in opposition, and fully disposed to assume for their guide the axiom which they had learned from the fabricators of the rights of man, "That insur-

rection and resistance to oppression, are the most sacred of duties." Against these people, armed and resolute as they were, France sent out an army, and the same tactics which had been used in conquering, or rather overrunning, the fairest parts of Europe, were resorted to in St. Domingo. Negociations were conducted with seeming liberality, but real treachery. Under promises of safety and protection, the chief of the negroes entrusted his person in the hands of the republicans, and, to the astonishment and indignation of his adherents, was sent to France, and detained a captive. But the hour of vengeance soon arrived; and the French forces being thinned by the natural effects of the climate, the negroes have resumed their arms; and, although the extent of the calamity is concealed, and its circumstances palliated, yet we have evidence and data sufficient for the foundation of an opinion, which points out nothing less than the utter extermination of the French forces. The dispatches published by that government exhibit no pretences to success; no mention is made of prisoners taken, or of a decrease of the black army; but we know that the veteran regiments which were originally sent out, are so diminished, that their ranks must be recruited by conscripts; and we know also that the sister of the First Consul has returned

to France a widow; her husband, General Leclerc, having fallen in this tremendous conflict. Thus is France punished for the political crimes of her first legislators, and thus is Touſſaint revenged for the wrongs and indignities which he ſuffers from her treachery.

While we pause to reflect a moment on the horrors which the operation of revolutionary principles has brought on the colony of St. Domingo, and on the French dominions in general, we can hardly persuade ourselves that beings exist so base and malignant as to entertain a desire of exposing this happy country to the same calamities. Yet it appears that such views are entertained, and pursued by the very same means, the seduction of the military. While the culprits are in a course of being tried, it would be indecent to rouse the public sensibility by descanting on the circumstances of the case, but we may with pride and exultation point to the court where they are to be arraigned, and exhibit to the admiration of surrounding nations that dignified magistracy, and respectable grand jury, which have concurred in framing the accusation; and we may boast of a court of justice and a system of law, in which circumstances most likely to excite the feelings of a loyal nation are discussed without

passion, and with no prejudice, except that which tends to the protection of the prisoners.

Against this country, its system, both social and political, as well as its most respectable senators, the French Journals continue to wage a war of insult and falsehood. The nature of their reasoning must extort a smile of contempt; but we observe with regret, that their sources of calumny are such as can only be attained through the connivance of people in official situations. It appears, that the files of captured and intercepted correspondence, for some years back, have been ransacked, to discover themes of abuse against the late ministers, and, by falsifying dates and inventing circumstances, they are made to apply to those who at present preside over his Majesty's councils. Were the facts fairly related, and those things which were done during the war ascribed to that period, the whole of this fabrication would fall to the ground. The calumnies against the system and constitution of England are too malicious, and too evidently founded in local and peculiar knowledge, though far removed from truth, to be the productions of Frenchmen: those we trace without difficulty to the nest of British rebels fostered at Paris: they are the tribute

paid for protection by a race whom this country at once loaths and despises—

> " A set of vagabonds, rascals, runagates,
> A scum of Britons,
> Whom their o'ercloyed country vomits forth
> To desperate adventures."

VIEW OF FRENCH LITERATURE.

The *Théâtre françois* (whose actors were heretofore called comedians in ordinary to the King, but who will probably hereafter be syled comedians in ordinary to his Consular or Imperial Majesty*) is become the Golgotha of modern dramatists; not a single play has permanently succeeded, since that of

* Our correspondent has frequently alluded in the course of his Essay to the rumoured intention of Bonaparte to assume the Imperial purple. Pursuing the thought, he supposes a mandate issued, commanding Baptiste the elder, one of the actors at this Theatre, to attend at St. Cloud, or Versailles, for the amusement of the new Emperor, on pain of being sent to the *Bicêtre*. An anecdote then follows, relating to some events in the year 1795, when the men of blood were exposed to general hate and persecution, and when Bonaparte owed his safety entirely to the charity of Baptiste. The whole story is *piquant*, and well told, but we have other reasons besides its length for omitting it.

Colin d'Harleville, already noticed. Even the audience at this house, seem strangers to the delicacy and decency which in former times characterised French spectators, and enabled the writers of that nation to assume an air of superiority over the dramatists of this. The first representation of a new play at the *Théâtre françois* is now a scene of shameful disorder, which is considered as happily terminated if no swords are drawn; an event that actually took place in the Pit, at the *Théâtre Louvois*. Before the curtain draws up, the people in the Pit shout, hiss, and attack all the boxes: not a woman dares to shew herself; and if one of that sex only exhibits a finger of her glove, a thousand abusive outcries are raised against her, the whole house is in commotion, and men of any feeling are tired of the place long before the play begins. The people in the Pit stand upon the benches, quarrel, fight, and are ashamed of nothing, not even of such acts as seizing the hat of any harmless spectator, striking it up like a tennis-ball, and endeavouring to make it fall on the head of some well-dressed woman, who is so indiscreet as to shew herself in the lower boxes.

Such was the sight exhibited a few days ago in this theatre, at the representation of a tragedy in five acts, by Le Mercier, called

Isule et Oroveze. It was not heard beyond the third act. The scene was laid among the Druids of Gaul: the improbability of the situations, and the barbarism of the style, combined to render it a most detestable performance. This tragedy presented a hero named *Clodoaire*, who being obliged to relate a victory he had gained, styled himself *un superbe guerrier!!* A journalist, friendly to government, seizes the opportunity to flatter the First Consul in these terms:—"We are delighted with his *Clodoaire*, the young and illustrious conqueror of Europe, who avenges *Lutetia* on the Germans and Britons, restores peace to his country, delivers her from the sanguinary and abominable worship of the *Teutates*, and as a reward for his services obtains the supremacy of the Gauls. But more than ordinary talents are required to arrive at this eminence without impediments." A hint from government to tragedy writers!—A good subject for a Prize Poem!

On the day following that when Melpomene made this inauspicious effort to rouse herself from her long lethargy, Thalia experienced a similar disaster at the *Théâtre Louvois*. There a comedy in five acts, in verse, called *La Manie des Mariages*, was damned, less tumultuously indeed, but not less completely.

[To be continued.]

TO THE EDITOR.

———-fuit hæc sapientia quondam
Publica privatis secernere; sacra profanis;
Concubitu prohibere vago; dare jura maritis; &c.
HOR. *Ars. Poëtica.*

Sir,

The diffusion of knowledge is much boasted by some, as the distinguishing felicity of the present times. People may indeed differ in their ideas of knowledge, but we shall agree in the unprecedented propagation of novels. Now, as these are a peculiar sort of writings, so they seem to have set up for themselves a peculiar test of their merit, which is the interest they excite: and yet I cannot but think it a matter of some consideration to what end that interest is in each particular case excited, and in favour of what persons and principles. It is also one of their chief attractions, that they require no thought; you may read them, 'tis said, as a dog drinks in the Nile, "*currens bibit;*" but the precipitation which defends him from danger, betrays you into it; since they cannot ease you of the labour of thinking, without stealing from you the faculty of judging: and therefore, when I open one of those sentimental com-

positions which profess to conduct me by my feelings, I always think they mean in plain English, to lead me by the nose.

Another charm they employ is, to persuade the reader that they prepare him for situations which may some day or other be his own: but if these situations lie out of his sphere of life, they create a perversion of his ideas; and if they infuse into him false notions concerning those in which he is to be placed, they do worse; they sophisticate his understanding, and corrupt his heart. You shall see them sometimes professing to teach every rank of life the manners and morals of all the rest; and this general familiarity, without any particular acquaintance, is doubtless very charming; but if they induce in any class a wish to change places with any other, if they sow a seed of disunion in that which holds together by common consent, if they tend to warp any part of the nice edifice of society from its assigned place, I conceive the symmetry of the whole is endangered by them.

I have thus summed up a few of the seductions which novels possess, and the mischiefs allied to them. I must also add, that the modern kind of novels appears to me the most calculated to produce those mischiefs. I distinguish this modern kind from the old tales of chivalry which were so long the de-

light of Europe; as well as from those of later origin, in which the humours, passions, and characters of mankind, described by men of learning, observation, and above all, of a fertile vein of wit, served up an agreeable dish, a sort of "*lanx satura*," to feast the vacant hours of the reader. Such are the romances of Rabelais, Scarron, Le Sage, Fielding, Smollet, &c. Of the modern branch the birth and parentage is uncertain: Mad. de Stael seems to consider Richardson as the father of the family; for my part, I shrewdly suspect J. J. Rousseau to have had a principal hand in their creation; at least I am sure that *Julia* and *St. Preux* are not wholly innocent of the birth of *Delphine*.

I propose to make some remarks on the new work of Mad. de Stael; and I am much more anxious that those who read the book should reflect upon it, than that my observations should be found in all respects just; it being of great consequence to society, that people should exercise their judgment on all they read, and of very little to any but me, whether my particular reasoning be good or bad.

In this novel, the author proposes to herself somewhat more of a plan than is usual in these compositions, and adheres to it somewhat less than is usual, at least with those who

propose one. She designs the story to be an illustration of this maxim, which her mother, Mad. Necker, had the honour of inventing, viz. that " men ought to set public opinion at defiance, but women ought to conform to it."

Now as in this country we acknowledge public opinion to be the security and bulwark of our laws, morals, and religion; and in proportion as it favours virtue or vice in every society, that society is either virtuous or vicious —as it is in the best society no other than the common consent of the members to esteem and enforce virtue and decorum; I could not but admire these propagandists of liberty, who, by one sweeping dispensation, absolve all human kind of the masculine gender from conforming to public opinion, while they enjoin to that other moiety who have the misfortune to be of the feminine gender, the cruel penance, as it is according to the confession of their own " *rescripta et extravagantiæ*," of submitting their necks to that galling yoke.

I leave this maxim to be examined by those who have a fancy for the discussion. Perhaps I do not understand the meaning of her who wrote it; perhaps she had not a distinct idea of her own meaning; perhaps *l'opinion publique* may mean something in French different from

the public opinion in English. It is however certain, that this is the maxim, which, with all its imperfections on its head, Mad. de Stael undertakes to illustrate; and on this plan, by an exhibition of crosses, vexations, and disappointments, all arising from the characters of the hero and heroine being *inverted* with regard to the above maxim: *i. e.* from the former being punctiliously mindful, and the latter systematically careless of the world's opinion.

'Tis true, as Mad. de Staël says, (Introd. p. ix.) that "in the literature of the ancients we find none of those compositions called Novels." I am apt also to imagine, that their peculiar manner of thinking disqualified them from having any notion of the superfine compositions of the present day, called sentimental novels. The end of tragic writing, as taught by their critics, and exemplified in their poets, was to demonstrate through the medium of the imagination, the fatal effects arising from the uncontrouled influence of the passions. Surely we all know, that we must be happy or miserable, in proportion as our passions are subject to, or predominant over, our reason. But this new tragedy of sentiment is fond of teaching, that our happiness or misery depends upon the particular disposition or character we bring into the world

with us; or perhaps upon a particular opinion we happen to entertain. Now if a man happens to entertain an opinion (for instance) that he may kill every one who offends him, and acts upon that opinion, he cannot fail of being a very unhappy man. But he is either a madman, in which case his example can have no influence on others, or he is a very vicious man: and although you may ascribe his unhappiness to his particular opinion, as you call it, we shall attribute it to the viciousness of his character. But it may be said, may not a person without any remarkable vice, either in himself or in others towards him, render himself unhappy? To this I answer, he very possibly may; but it is very contrary to Reason and Christianity that he should: and although, if you would establish this opinion, you are in the right to get rid of the latter, yet the former is a stumbling block in your way. But you may further ask, is it not possible that with all the exercise of his reason, and the aid of Christianity too, we may not be able to surmount certain sensations and impressions which canker the happiness of life? I will admit, for charity's sake, this naked possibility; and I affirm, that it is just possible a man, eminently vicious, may enjoy some kind of happiness: but this subject would have been thought by the antients directly

contrary to the end of tragedy; and for the same reason I submit that the case you suppose is so too. For the moral effect of tragedy being to strengthen the reason, and regulate the passions, I ask whether, of the two cases, the unhappy man, in spite of reason and virtue, or the happy man, in spite of reason and vice, either is, according to the standard so often admired, and never yet rejected, a ligitimate subject for tragic composition? But we have Mad. de Stael's own authority, that the misfortunes of her hero and heroine are owing to their character being in opposition to Mad. Necker's golden rule.

[To be continued.]

THE THEATRE.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,

I am very much pleased with the letter in your first paper, on the subject of the Theatres, which I hope will attract the notice of those who have the good sense to be disgusted at the present state of the drama, and a spirit to resist the impositions practised on the public to keep it in its present disgraceful state of inferiority. I see it repeated in the newspa-

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pers, and most probably by order from the Green-Room, that Drury-lane theatre has been far more productive from the commencement of the present season, to Christmas, than it was in the same period of the former year, when Mr. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons were engaged, and in a course of performance. Now, Sir, though this statement appears in a form of a paragraph, relating the news of the theatre, it certainly has an air of exultation, beyond the pride of pecuniary advantage: it is clearly levelled at the professional importance of Mr. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, and silently suggests, that fine acting, and the productions of the first dramatic writers, are by no means necessary to fill a play-house. The first blow was given the legitimate drama, by extending the dimensions of the old theatre, so as to diminish the effect, and increase the difficulty of the actors' exertions: and we have now a new theatre, whose monstrous extent sets all good acting at defiance; where a good play can be neither seen or heard, and which is fit only to display those spectacles and pantomimical representations, in which it is rivalled upon a lesser scale, by Sadler's Wells, the Circus, and Astley's Amphitheatre. If the population of London is so increased, as to afford a sufficient number of undramatic people to fill the pre-

sent undramatic theatres, another ought to be erected, for the rational and improving gratification of those who still retain, and wish to bring up their children in, a genuine taste for dramatic excellence.

I know it has been maintained by the theatrical retainers, that the proprietors of the theatre are, like other people, masters of their own property, and have a right to employ it in the way which promises the greatest advantage. To this argument I have no objection: if the proprietors acknowledge the theatres to be mere trading concerns, I have a right to assert, that the true spirit of trade does not allow of monopoly, and therefore other adventurers should be allowed to try their fortune in the same branch of commerce, and have an opportunity of improving the manufacture, both in fabric and pattern. I suppose, however, that all observation of this kind would be answered by a calm hint that there are such things as patents.—I know something of these self-same patents, and shall, with your permission, on some future day, transmit a few remarks upon them to your office. I cannot, indeed, reconcile it to my reason, that the metropolis should, in a matter of so much importance as the theatre, be at the mercy of the proprietors of two theatres. Patents or exclusive rights are granted to en-

courage inventions and improvements in the various branches of art and science, and thereby secure a reasonable and peculiar advantage to the inventor: but the wisdom of the legislature has confined these privileges to a certain period, after which it is thrown into the general stock of public property.

A comparison of the term, during which Mr. Gibbon, Sir William Blackstone, or Doctor Robertson, enjoyed an exclusive right in their immortal works, with that which confines the inhabitants of the metropolis to two theatres, and leaves them at the mercy of avaricious or negligent patentees, may furnish an ample topic for remark and consideration.

The price of admittance to the winter playhouses was, a few years ago, very impudently advanced, and unaccountably submitted to; and if a friend to the comforts and innocent amusements of the lower classes had not stood forward on the occasion, the One Shilling Gallery would have been removed from the theatres. It is not, I trust, in the ordinary course of human affairs, that a Parliamentary Proprietor of a theatre, who opposed with great energy and eloquence, Lord North's proposed tax on play-house tickets, for the benefit of his country, should afterwards venture to lay a similar imposition for the benefit of himself.—But so it was, and the public were gulled into submission.

It is among my maxims, that national taste is connected with national virtue; and whatever degrades the one must have a powerful influence in weakening the other. That the present state of the drama has a tendency to produce this lamentable effect cannot be denied by any one who will allow himself to reflect on the subject. *Apathy* has, of late, been a favourite watch-word in political society; the enemies of the late war accused the people of apathy, for submitting to its continuance; while the enemies of peace reproached them for a similar insensibility on receiving it: and when I consider the present character of theatrical exhibitions, there appears to be no choice, but to apply the influence of apathy or folly to the frequenters of them. C.

A THOUGHT FOR AUTHORS.

If brains could evaporate, my scull would soon be an empty one: but whether it be from the thick texture of their inclosure, which no vapours, however subtle, can penetrate, or from what cause, I know not;—here are mine, in as good and as compliable a state as I ever remember them. It is said that a

piece of musk, after having dispensed its odours to a large room, for twelve successive months, will not lose a grain of its specific weight; so that some naturalists have concluded it to possess the power of reassimilating its effluvia to itself; and why may not the brains possess the same assimilating faculty? and if they have, mine, I trust, will be greatly improved; for, I flatter myself, that the evaporations, which have of late flown off from them, will pass into many a good heart, and be conveyed from thence through many a bright eye;—and return, O how heightened and improved, to my brain again!

The first work of an author is generally the pure, spontaneous, unsophisticated offering of his own brain. If he improves in his second, it is owing, according to my principle, to his first ideas having passed through good and wise minds before they had returned to him. When the second work proves inferior to the first, there is too much reason to believe, that its readers, in general, have been such as to disgrace his ideas in the contemplation of them; so that they have come back, not only unimproved, but absolutely impaired.

The Paradise Lost, one of the noblest efforts of human genius, when it was first published, was read by few or none, and they who did read it were incapable of relishing

its beauties. Now, Sir, what was the consequence?—Why, Sir, the consequence was, that Milton's sublime intellectual effluvia having mingled with the dullness of his dull readers, returned to his brain to give a proof of their deteriorated state, in forming the *Paradise Regained.*

Hence then it may appear, that to the ignorance or insensibility of the first readers of the Paradise Lost, we are indebted for the imperfections of the Paradise Regained; and that, to the same cause may be attributed the otherwise unaccountable opinion of the great Poet himself, that the latter was the superior poem.

Remember therefore, O ye authors and authoresses, the importance of being read by the wise, and the consequences which will attend your being read by fools; and give such works alone to the world as the latter will disclaim, and the former will approve.

C.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,

It is, perhaps, impossible to ascertain whether the injudiciousness of praise, or the indiscrimination of censure, has more impeded the progress both of talent and virtue. Have you not, Sir, in admitting into your paper the ob-

observations of a *Friend to the Press*, being betrayed into the latter extreme? Have you not, in this instance, unintentionally opposed our general and common interests, in appearing to animadvert on the conduct of those patrons of literary merit, the booksellers of the united kingdoms? As a friend to letters, I am sure you cannot but feel this remonstrance; and as a gentleman, you will readily afford to me the liberty of justifying so respectable a commercial body from the insinuation of their antagonist.

The prejudices which have operated against every thing like combinations or monopolies, appear already to have affected the Proprietors of the British Press. Surely nothing can be more unjust. Before we condemn an association of men, the nature and object of their associating ought at least to be inquired into; now, what were the views of the united booksellers in the publication of their literary newspaper? Was it not to benefit and promote the cause of taste and science; (I appeal to their prospectus) to afford to men of letters an unprecedented facility in communicating their views; and to employ a great proportion, who might otherwise (such is the tasteless degeneracy of the times!) have lived wholly destitute of employment or resources? That such were the real views of the united

booksellers, unmixed with sinister considerations of personal profit, will no longer be contested, when it is known, that the fund destined to defray the charges of this magnanimous undertaking, enormous as they are, has been raised within themselves; and that they will persevere in their laudable intentions, for twelve months to come, in spite of prejudiced majorities; and though not one of their papers should, during the said year, be either purchased or perused by any individual of his Majesty's subjects.

A cry was indeed raised, that the British Press must take the tone of its proprietors to the utter detriment of merit. Happily for the interests of British learning, this assertion is unfounded. Has not the person, who calls himself their literary editor, assured the world, that, so far from his being influenced by his patrons or employers, he is almost unknown to them? But we have better evidence of the truth of this declaration, by referring to the department over which he must be supposed to preside. Though some booksellers may formerly have been porters, or coblers, or carpenters, or bookbinders; even these, the meanest of this worshipful brotherhood, by a long intercourse with books, and men of books, should of necessity have acquired something like a taste for writing. But there

are others, (and, let it be hoped, such as direct the proceedings of the union) men classically educated, and accustomed to liberal views. Can it be supposed, that these, did they not disdain to interfere with the conduct of their Journals, would suffer the insertion of such articles as are daily to be met with in those papers? Can we imagine that the Messieurs Rivington, for instance, who are reported to be considerable proficients in the art of criticism, truly so called, and who may boast a poetical ſhopman, assisted by the tribe of British critics, could not furnish better articles, both of poetry and analysis, than have hitherto adorned the folios of the British Press? Where is Mr. Phillips, with his spirit of things, his port-folios, his hints, his anecdotes, and his swarm of *poetæ minores?* Every thing must be in the power of men, within whose "*graſp*" is the harvest of literature—the concentrated cogitations of the *Globe*! But great merit is always bashful; and it may require some time to woo to their embraces the offspring of the most eminent literati.

It was long since asserted, by Dr. Johnson, that booksellers were the only true patrons of literature; and if the houses of nobility are shut against authors, the shops of booksellers are thrown generally open. There you may see the unfortunate sons of the Muses walk-

ing up and down, day after day, like the briefless barristers of Westminster-Hall, feasting on the proud consciousness of talents undiscerned, and of worth unrewarded. That they are rarely invited by their patrons to participate in the luxuries of the table, is not owing to a principle of unfeelingness, but, as averred by a great trading Mecænas of the present day, from a due consideration of the influence of matter on spirit, and lest the preponderancy of the former should relax the elasticity of the latter. The feast of the mind, the access to the shelves, is free and unbounded.

Literature has ever been termed a republic; and, faithful to its title, has constantly presented a scene of envy, competition, assassination, and anarchy. Nothing could be more laudable, more worthy of intelligence and disinterestedness, than the attempt of the united booksellers, to remedy those alarming evils by subjecting these heterogeneous powers to something like order and sound government. This is an age for experiments. Revolutions for experiment, wars for experiment, peace for experiment. For experiment, women go nearly naked, officers become actors, admirals magicians, statesmen children, parsons deists. Let us now try a literary experiment: as to 3 or 4000l. to be

consumed in paper and print, by the proprietors of the British Press, it is a trifle; it is well spent, for the good of literature; and it will be well spent, I suppose, for the experience of booksellers. For my part, I augur nothing inauspicious, either to our national taste or laws, from this formidable conjunction of lettered merchants; nothing like a conspiracy against all that is agreeable and valuable. The basis on which it is erected is so broad, that every thing promises to find its level in this multitudinous and comprehensive mass of opinions and sentiments, prejudices and interests. Here dissent will check episcopacy; while episcopacy must effectually bridle the captious impertinence of nonconformity. Here, democracy will be nicely balanced by monarchy, though each may alternately or occasionally prevail, to the better contentment of both. Here, the promulgators of a bad taste will be opposed by some who have no taste, and rectified by those who possess a little taste. Give but time to this experiment, and it will work its end. There are, no doubt, minds which, if there be a light and a dark side, love to dwell on the dark. With such, I am far from expecting to agree. These will contemplate the combination of booksellers, as ominous to truth, to independence, to taste: whilst I shall consider it

as a beneficial, gigantic exertion for the relief of depressed authors and authorlings; and much more commendable than the benefit clubs for dead ones, which a certain bustling and discontented baronet, in conjunction with a few anonymous scribblers, is labouring to establish in this metropolis.

A TRUE FRIEND TO THE PRESS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,

Notwithstanding the grave declarations you have made to avoid that kind of paragraphic writing, which appears to be considered by the circles of fashion as the most amusing and consequently the most valuable part of the daily papers, I really believe that you must relax from the austerity of such a determination, and conform yourself to the leading taste of high life, if you wish to derive any real advantage from your weekly publication. It must, indeed, have been observed by you, that all the papers adopt, with more or less success, this lively mode of sketching life and manners; and that the popularity of a newspaper depends upon the quantity and quality of those animated representations of daily occurrences, which you are pleased to

mention in such decided terms of disapprobation and disgust.

If people of fashion are pleased to encourage the broad puns, the flippant remarks, the insignificant descriptions, the petty intelligence, and yelping malice, which fill the columns of the daily prints, you must absolutely admit them into the PIC NIC, or it will not be honoured with the notice, much less with the protection which it seems to solicit. If Chinese forms and decorations were to become the fashion, the architect who should refuse to deviate from the rules of Vitruvius and Palladio, must look to some other profession for his support. The tailor who is called to make clothes for a deformed person, must suspend his notion of fine proportions, and suit his measure to the deformity. I shall take the liberty also of adding an anecdote which I read in a book, that I bought the other day at a stall, as it seems to be very applicable to your situation. It is of Solon, the Grecian lawgiver, who, being asked if he could not have composed a better system of laws for the people of Athens, replied in the affirmative; but added withal, that it was as good as the Athenians were capable of receiving.

I really admire your theory, and think it would be much better for the people of rank

and fashion, if they would allow you to reduce it to practice: but the experience of half a dozen numbers of your work, will convince you that there is no alternative but to adopt the fashionable style, or dispose of your undertaking to those who will.

It is, Sir, under this conviction that I present myself to your attention, as a person who believes himself to be qualified for this department, to which, I humbly presume, you must at length have recourse. At the same time, I take the liberty of sending you some specimens of my talents in that line of writing, which, however you may despise it, and despicable as in reality it may be, must find its way into your columns. I submit them to your favourable consideration, and trust that you will find them equal at least, to the same kind of writing which enlivens, more or less, all the daily papers.

Specimens of fashionable Paragraphs.

Sir William Simkin, who is a well-known admirer of nature, unites the present cold season with the appearance of spring, He drives his curricle, clad like an inhabitant of Siberia, while his horses heads are decorated with branches of *geranium*.

An elegant female happening to fall as she was walking down Bond-street last Saturday,

rose in great wrath, and abused the shopkeeper before whose door the accident happened, in very harsh terms, for not having sprinkled the pavement with cinders, which would have prevented her downfal. This circumstance occasioned a small stoppage of the passengers, one of whom, with a very happy fancy, gave the lady the title of *Cinderella*, or the glass *slipper*.

Lord Bathurst is very singularly circumstanced when he inhabits the metropolis, by being at the same time, the *first* and the *last* man in it. He appears in the former character to those who enter town from Knightsbridge; and in the latter to such as quit it by the same road. This may appear very extraordinary; but the situation of his lordship's house at Hyde-Park Corner, will solve the enigma.

Lady Betty Bumkin, one day last week, having made a false step, as she was walking down St. James's-street, fell against a private door with so much weight and violence, as to force it open. An officer, who was passing by at the time, consoled her ladyship with the compliment that she had made a fundamental improvement in the *Lock* step.

Dr. F——, the celebrated civilian, in making a flourish last Sunday on the Serpentine River, lost his equilibrium, and came down

on the ice. Mr. C——— with his ready vivacity, observed on the occasion, that the Doctor never quitted his profession for a moment, and had just then enforced an argument *a posteriori*.

It has been asserted, in one of the democratic papers, that the Poet Laureate, Mr. Pye, deals too much in *puff paste*. We, on the contrary, think that he encloses his fruit in a good, wholesome, constitutional *crust*, and in a tasteful form, suited to the Royal tables.

Having given you, Sir, these specimens of that elegant vivacity, with which I can shape the current circumstances of every day into detached paragraphs, I shall now call your attention to my skill in the art of *prolongation*, or the carrying on the same subject through as many successive papers as circumstances may require.

Specimen of prolongating Paragraphs.

Monday.—*Mrs. Jehu*, of curricle notoriety, has frequently appeared during the frost, in a large bear-skin pelice, which obtained for her the temporary name of the *Ursa Major*.

Wednesday.—We are sorry to find that our giving the title of *Ursa Major* to *Mrs. Jehu*,

in our paper of Monday, should have caused so much offence to our fashionable readers, as we intended no more by it than a very elegant and delicate compliment. We beg leave, therefore, to assure the noble and other respectable persons who have written to us with so much indignation on the subject, that the *Ursa Major*, or great bear, is a *constellation* which, according to Ptolemy's Catalogue, consists of 36 stars; and according to Tycho Brahe's, of 56; but, according to the Hamstead Catalogue, contains 215.

Thursday.—We are very much concerned that our reporter of the streets, who in general is very correct in his intelligence, made a very unfortunate mistake in his account of *Mrs. Jehu:* one of that lady's grooms, who constantly attends her in her excursions about town, having been at our office, by her express command, to assure us that her wardrobe does not contain a pelice which answers to our misrepresentation, and that she wears no skin but her own, and a large tippet of *mock sable.*

Thus, Sir, you will be pleased to observe, that I have contrived, from this single subject, to enliven fashionable chit-chat, to communicate science, to exemplify the virtues of modesty, candour, and justice; and at the

same time to produce three very interesting paragraphs for the papers of three several days.

Permit me to conclude by assuring you, that I only wish to be rewarded according to your opinion of my merit. I have already raised myself from an oilman's errand-boy to be livery-servant to the kept mistress of a special pleader, who kindly advanced me to be a writer in his office, where, by copying law proceedings ten hours a day for four years, I have acquired that art of playing upon words, and twisting expressions, which qualifies me, I hope, for your service; nor should I refuse to enter into it, at the rate of 13s. 4d. per week; with a small supernumerary allowance for paper, pens, ink, wafers, and tallow candle. I am, Sir, with great respect,

Your faithful humble servant,

TIMOTHY DAPPERWIT.

No. 4, Chitterling-court,
Hungerford-market.

P. S. I had almost forgotten to inform you, that I can descend into an area as nimbly, get into a fashionable kitchen as humbly, obtain the domestic intelligence as readily, and regale on half-sucked oranges from the desert above stairs as contentedly, as any of the *gentlemen* who are employed in the service of the daily papers, be they who they may.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,

I read your prospectus with some satisfaction, till I arrived at that part in which you declared that you intended to omit all criticisms upon deeply speculative points of philosophy, &c. &c. What, Sir, do you then confess you have less knowledge than the editors of other Journals? Where is the writer of a newspaper, who is not an adept in the principles of rhetoric, poetry, music, painting, sculpture, chymistry, and the whole circle of the arts and sciences? Who is the conductor of a public print, that is not a natural and experimental philosopher, an elegant classic, and a profound politician? To tell you the truth, I, who am a plain man, and do not, in the range of my acquaintance, usually meet with people thus gifted with super-eminent talents, have often wondered how these various perfections have been obtained. I do not credit the virtue of talismanic qualities, or I should conclude that the press indues its proprietors with such miraculous attainments; for many of these all accomplished persons have, I believe, received no other diploma than what a printer could confer: and though they be exquisite judges of

politeness, have passed through the exercises of no academy, but the box-lobbies of the theatres. With respect, however, to their *fashionable information*, they may, possibly be minutely correct; for they have, no doubt, many friends amongst the fine gentlemen, and coquettes of the *third* tables of great families.

Algebraists talk of taking the thing sought as granted, and proceeding by some *few* data, which are known, till they perfect the solution of the problem. This mode is, perhaps, adopted by the writers in question; but I fear the town must wait a considerable time for a full and complete exposition of what is at present a negative doubt, whether, or not, they actually possess these abilities.

But not to digress, how can you expect to succeed after such an acknowledgment of the paucity of your acquirements? Let me advise you to desist in time, for unless you will assume it as a position that your mind is *encyclopedique*, be assured you are not calculated for the editor of a paper.

I am, Sir, &c. &c.

H.

TO THE INVISIBLE GIRL.

THEY try to persuade me, my dear little sprite,
That you are not a daughter of æther and light,
Nor have any concern with those fanciful forms,
Who dance upon rainbows, and ride upon storms,
That, in short, you're a WOMAN, your lip and your breast
As mortal as ever were tasted or prest!
But I will not believe it—No, Science, to you
I have long bid a last, and a careless adieu;
Still flying from nature to study her laws,
And dulling delight, by exploring its cause,
You forget how superior for mortals below
Is the fiction they dream to the truth that they know.
O who that has ever had rapture complete,
Would ask HOW we feel it, or WHY it is sweet?
How rays are confin'd, or how particles fly
Through the medium refin'd of a glance or a sigh?—
Is there one who but ONCE would not rather have known it
Than have written, with HARVEY, whole volumes upon it?
No, no—but for YOU, my invisible love,
I will swear you are one of those spirits that rove
By the bank, where at twilight the Poet reclines,
When the Star of the West on his solitude shines,
And the magical fingers of Fancy have hung
Ev'ry breeze with a sigh, every leaf with a tongue:
O whisper him then, 'tis retirement alone
Can hallow his harp, or ennoble its tone;
Like you, with a veil of seclusion between,
His song to the world let him utter unseen,
And like you, a legitimate child of the spheres,
Escape from the eye, to enrapture the ears!
Sweet agent of mystery! how I should love,
In the wearisome ways I am fated to rove,
For ever to have you invisibly nigh,
Inhaling for ever your song and your sigh!

'Mid the crowds of the world, and the murmurs of care,
I could sometimes converse with my nymph of the air,
And turn with delight from the clamorous crew,
To steal in the pauses one whisper from you!
O come, and be near me; for ever be mine;
We shall hold in the air a communion divine,
As pure as, of old, was imagin'd to dwell
In the grotto of Numa, or Socrates' cell!
And oft, at those lingering moments of night,
When the eye is weigh'd down, and the eye-lid is light,
You shall come to my pillow, and tell me of love,
Such as Angel to Angel might whisper above!
O spirit!—and then, could you borrow the tone
Of that voice, to my ear so bewitchingly known,
The voice of THE ONE upon earth, who has twin'd
With her essence for ever my heart and my mind;
Tho' lonely, and far from the light of her smile,
An exile, and weary, and hopeless the while,
Could you shed for a moment her voice on my ear,
I will think at that moment my Cara is near;
That she comes, with consoling enchantment to speak,
And kisses my eye-lid, and sighs on my cheek,
And tells me the night shall go rapidly by,
For the dawn of our hope, of our heaven is nigh!
Sweet spirit! if such be your magical pow'r,
It will lighten the lapse of full many an hour,
And let Fortune's realities frown as they will,
Hope, Fancy, and Cara may smile for me still!

T. M.

LINES ADDRESSED TO A FLUTE.

When Orpheus lost his blooming bride,
Frantic, o'er rocks, through woods he hied:
He struck the chords that strung his shell—
The chords his grief could scarcely tell.

And, simple reed, wouldst *thou* express
Passion urg'd to fierce excess;
Ere thou hadst utter'd half my pain,
Thy slender form would burst in twain!

Yet what thou canst, in pity try,
Thrill with despair, and breathe the sigh—
Despair, that rends the trembling breast;
The sigh, that wrings a heart opprest!

OLD NICK TO PIC NIC.

Sir,

It would give me great satisfaction to address you in a more affectionate manner, but I cannot do so with propriety, until I have ascertained the positive degree of consanguinity that exists between us. From the similarity of our surnames, and the excessive *natural affection* I feel for you, I am convinced that I shall ultimately discover, on consulting (when my many *worldly* concerns will permit) the endless archives of my house, that I am entitled to the pleasure of being your relation, and that you have the honour of boasting of a descent from a family more ancient than that of any Scot or Cambro Briton of them all; more ancient indeed than Adam himself; and one whose name has filled the globe with terror, and whose deeds transcend in fame all those of every other

hero; leaving that most *formidable rival, the would-be Emperor of the Gauls*, shorn of his beams, and in a partial eclipse.

I shall lose no time in making the needful research, and should it eventually prove, according to my shrewd suspicion, it will fare well with you; for though I have friends, courtiers, and acquaintances, beyond the power of numbers to enumerate, you will be my nearest kin, and heir to all my vast possessions in *stock*, both *dead and alive*. You will indeed find me a *warm* old fellow, and though I am sometimes diabolically calumniated, yet you shall be compelled to "give the devil his due;" for I will stick to *you* to the very last! *Nothing*, however, till I die. As one proof of this, I here subscribe a few verses for your paper.

Ardently yours,

Jan. 13, 1803. OLD NICK.

THE BARRISTER.

AN EPIGRAM.

Homunculus. CICERO.
A little man! Reynolds's Delays and Blunders.

A Counsel once, of pigmy size,
To make a motion did arise;
But KENYON'S* sight his sense defeated,
And thinking still the Dwarf was seated,

* *This epigram is founded in fact.*

" 'Tis common, Sir, with all," said he,
" To stand, when they're addressing me."
Dumb was the Counsel, and offended,
When thus a wag * his cause defended :
" Justice, my Lord, from you my friend expects,
You know, DE MINIMIS *non curat lex !*"

* *Mr. Jekyl.*